



## University of Pittsburgh

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
Department of Neurological Surgery

July 14, 1977

Dear Surgery Council Member:

Enclosed you will find a copy of the original Surgery Council Minutes from the Houston Meeting. These were submitted to the Secretary of the AAPA. Apparently, the minutes were too late to meet the deadline for the Newsletter or any of the other journals.

Enclosed you will also find a letter from Robin Morgenstern requesting that the minutes be presented in outline form for publication in the ensuing Newsletter. In compliance with their request, the Surgery Council officers have submitted a second document also enclosed.

I would appreciate comments and concerns on the minutes as published. In addition, I have yet to hear from any P.A.'s in attendance of the Surgery Council meeting with regard to continuing concerns and issues at large. Please feel free to present problems and issues as well as general information to the officers of the Surgery Council. We will in turn attempt to have them published in the Newsletter or one of the journals.

In addition, as requested of the National Office, please address your concerns to David Bissonette or Charles Noyes directly at the addresses listed below.

David J. Bissonette, S.A., P.A.-C  
Department of Neurosurgery  
Presbyterian-University Hospital  
230 Lothrop Street  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213

Charles Noyes  
8333 8th Avenue South  
Birmingham, Alabama 35206

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Bissonette".

David J. Bissonette, S.A., P.A.-C

DJB/slj  
Enclosures

American Academy of Physicians' Assistants

2341 Jefferson Davis Highway Suite 700  
Arlington, Virginia 22202 703/920-5730

Donald W. Fisher, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

May 31, 1977

David Bissonette PA-C  
Department of Neurosurgery  
University of Pittsburgh  
Pittsburgh, Pa 15261

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of May 16, 1977... I hope that I may be of service to the Surgery Council of the AAPA.

I spoke to Marty Wilson in the National Office, and gave her the information concerning the results of the elections in Houston. Thus, your address and that of Charles Noyes should be printed in the next issue of the Newsletter (which I understand will be in the Health Practitioner magazine). If these do not appear in print in at least one publication of the AAPA, I will speak to her once more.

I would appreciate it if you could update the concerns of the Council, and put them in list form for the next Newsletter. Time could not permit including them in the upcoming article. I would especially be interested in addressing the issue of insurance coverage through the new carriers (Bercanus).

I hope that this year will bring an increase in the response from the National Office, and that we will see better communication through the Newsletter.

Sincerely yours,

*Robin Morgenstern PA-C*  
Robin Morgenstern PA-C  
3200 N. Lake Shore Drive  
Chicago, Illinois 60657

5/10/77

SURGICAL COUNCIL MINUTES  
(Houston)

The Surgery Council of the AAPA met in its second annual convocation. New elections were held resulting in the following change of officers:

David J. Bissonette, Chairman  
Department of Neurosurgery  
Presbyterian-University Hospital  
Room 9402  
230 Lothrop Street  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213

Charles Noyes, Vice-Chairman  
8333 Eighth Avenue South  
Birmingham, Alabama 35206

The issues of major concern which surfaced during the course of the Council Meeting include national certification for surgical physician's assistants, reimbursement for surgical physician's assistants, malpractice insurance, continuing medical education geared toward surgery subspecialties and the apparent poor communication in disseminating information through the National Office from Council officers to surgical physician's assistants and from surgical physician's assistants to their respective officers.

In reviewing the minutes of last year's Surgery Council Meeting, it is evident that many of the concerns are redundant ones indicating persistent difficulties yet requiring satisfactory resolution.

In terms of difficulties with communication, the Council's suggestion was that the Secretary of the Academy be apprised of the need for utilization of the AAPA Newsletter in disseminating information to surgical physician's assistants. In addition, the Council constituency requested that the addresses of Council officers be included in the initial report of Council minutes. In the past, information had apparently been funneled through the National Office and lost in transmission from constituency to officers of the Council.

Concerns over third party reimbursement were also raised during the course of the meeting. A point was made that special attention should be paid toward the wording and scope of official policy statements of the Academy such that subspecialty P.A.'s not be excluded in the development and implementation of the reimbursement process. It was emphasized that in terms of cost effectiveness, surgical P.A.'s are in a good position to effect an anti-inflationary impact on health care. The mechanism already exists for payment of first assistant fees. With a surgical physician's assistant in the position of first assistant, the surgeon would have experienced, qualified help with no more outlay for first assistant fees and perhaps lower first assistant fees when utilizing a surgical physician's assistant in lieu of another physician. It was also emphasized that surgical physician's assistants are not of a mind to displace all general practice physicians who may first assist surgeons. Rather, surgeons who wish to utilize physician's assistants in surgery should be able to count on appropriate reimbursement.

A special problem regarding surgical P.A.'s was raised. Specifically, surgical physician's assistants in Pennsylvania cannot be covered by the Lloyd's of London policy available to all other Academy members. Some clarification was provided by Mr. Neil Cohen at the general business session. However, the deficiency remains an enigma which will effect greater numbers of surgical physician's assistants and remains a concern of the surgery council.

The Council membership also encouraged reaffirmation of the Academy's position in encouraging the National Commission on Certification of Physician's Assistants to develop a mechanism of certification for subspecialty physician's assistants.

I urge surgical physician's assistants to utilize their Council as a sounding board for their concerns which in turn will be forwarded to the Academy. Concerns should be addressed to the Council officers directly at the addresses listed herein.

David Bissonette, P.A.-C

Concerns aired in the Surgery Council of the AAPA at the annual conference in Houston include:

- 1) A national certification examination for surgical PA's.
- 2) More CME oriented toward surgery.
- 3) Better communication between the national office, Surgery Council officers, and members.
- 4) Reimbursement of all PA's irrespective of subspecialty.
- 5) The inequitable and unjustifiable dichotomy in malpractice rates for PA's based on a specialty practice.
- 6) The lack of malpractice coverage for surgical PA's in Pennsylvania by the Academy's present insurance carrier.

New officers of the Surgery Council are listed below. Please address responses and concerns to the officers directly rather than through the national office.

David J. Bissonette, P.A.-C, S.A.  
Presbyterian-University Hospital  
Room 9402 - Department of Neurosurgery  
230 Lothrop Street  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213

Charles Noyes, S.A.  
8333 8th Avenue South  
Birmingham, Alabama 35206

cc: File  
Robin Morgenstern